

### IN THE CLAIMS

The status of the active claims, including amendments provided herein, is as follows:

1. (Original) An isolated polynucleotide which encodes a protein comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2.
2. (Original) The isolated polynucleotide of Claim 1, wherein said protein has serine/threonine kinase activity.
3. (Original) An isolated polynucleotide, which comprises SEQ ID NO:1.

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4. (Currently Amended) An isolated polynucleotide which is fully complimentary to the polynucleotide of Claim 3.
- B<sub>3</sub> 5. (Currently Amended) An isolated polynucleotide which is at least 70% identical to the polynucleotide of ~~Claim 3~~ SEQ ID NO:1, wherein said polynucleotide encodes a protein having serine/threonine kinase activity.
6. (Currently Amended) An isolated polynucleotide which is at least 80% identical to the polynucleotide of ~~Claim 3~~ SEQ ID NO:1, wherein said polynucleotide encodes a protein having serine/threonine kinase activity.
7. (Currently Amended) An isolated polynucleotide which is at least 90% identical to the polynucleotide of ~~Claim 3~~ SEQ ID NO:1, wherein said polynucleotide encodes a protein having serine/threonine kinase activity.
8. (Currently Amended) An isolated polynucleotide which hybridizes under stringent conditions to the complement of the polynucleotide of ~~Claim 3~~ SEQ ID NO:1; wherein said stringent conditions comprise washing in 5X SSC at a temperature from 50 to 68°C and wherein said polynucleotide encodes a protein having serine/threonine kinase activity.

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9. (Original) The isolated polynucleotide of Claim 3, which encodes a protein having serine/threonine kinase activity.
10. (Original) A vector comprising the isolated polynucleotide of Claim 1.

11. (Original) A vector comprising the isolated polynucleotide of Claim 3.
12. (Original) A host cell comprising the isolated polynucleotide of Claim 1.
13. (Original) A host cell comprising the isolated polynucleotide of Claim 3.
14. (Original) A plant cell comprising the isolated polynucleotide of Claim 1.
15. (Original) A plant cell comprising the isolated polynucleotide of Claim 3.
16. (Original) A transgenic plant comprising the isolated polynucleotide sequence of Claim 1.
17. (Original) A transgenic plant comprising the isolated polynucleotide sequence of Claim 3.
18. (Original) The transgenic plant of Claim 16, wherein said plant is *Arabidopsis thaliana*.
19. (Original) The transgenic plant of Claim 17, wherein said plant is *Arabidopsis thaliana*.
20. (Original) The transgenic plant of Claim 16, wherein said plant is selected from the group consisting of wheat, corn, peanut cotton, oat, and soybean plant.
21. (Original) The transgenic plant of Claim 16, wherein the isolated polynucleotide is operably linked to an inducible promoter.
22. (Original) The transgenic plant of Claim 17, wherein the isolated polynucleotide is operably linked to an inducible promoter.
23. (Withdrawn) A process for screening for polynucleotides which encode a protein having serine/threonine kinase activity comprising hybridizing the isolated polynucleotide of Claim 1 to the polynucleotide to be screened; expressing the polynucleotide to produce a protein; and detecting the presence or absence of serine/threonine kinase activity in said protein.
24. (Withdrawn) A process for screening for polynucleotides which encode a protein

having serine/threonine kinase activity comprising hybridizing the isolated polynucleotide of Claim 3 to the polynucleotide to be screened; expressing the polynucleotide to produce a protein; and detecting the presence or absence of serine/threonine kinase activity in said protein.

25. (Withdrawn) A process for screening for polynucleotides which encode a protein having serine/threonine kinase activity comprising hybridizing the isolated polynucleotide of Claim 8 to the polynucleotide to be screened; expressing the polynucleotide to produce a protein; and detecting the presence or absence of serine/threonine kinase activity in said protein.

26. (Withdrawn) A method for detecting a nucleic acid with at least 70% homology to nucleotide of Claim 1, comprising contacting a nucleic acid sample with a probe or primer comprising at least 15 consecutive nucleotides of the nucleotide sequence of Claim 1, or at least 15 consecutive nucleotides of the complement thereof.

27. (Withdrawn) A method for producing a nucleic acid with at least 70% homology to nucleotide of Claim 1, comprising contacting a nucleic acid sample with a primer comprising at least 15 consecutive nucleotides of the nucleotide sequence of Claim 1, or at least 15 consecutive nucleotides of the complement thereof.

28. (Withdrawn) A method for detecting a nucleic acid with at least 70% homology to nucleotide of Claim 3, comprising contacting a nucleic acid sample with a probe or primer comprising at least 15 consecutive nucleotides of the nucleotide sequence of Claim 3, or at least 15 consecutive nucleotides of the complement thereof.

29. (Withdrawn) A method for producing a nucleic acid with at least 70% homology to nucleotide of Claim 3, comprising contacting a nucleic acid sample with a primer comprising at least 15 consecutive nucleotides of the nucleotide sequence of Claim 3, or at least 15 consecutive nucleotides of the complement thereof.

30. (Withdrawn) A method for making SOS2 protein, comprising culturing the host cell of Claim 12 for a time and under conditions suitable for expression of SOS2, and collecting the SOS2 protein.

31. (Withdrawn) A method for making SOS2, comprising culturing the host cell of Claim 13 for a time and under conditions suitable for expression of SOS2, and collecting the SOS2 protein.

32. (Original) A method of making a transgenic plant comprising introducing the polynucleotide of Claim 1 into the plant.

By 33. (Currently Amended) A method of making a transgenic plant comprising introducing the polynucleotide of Claim 1 into the plant.

34. (Currently Amended) A method of increasing the salt tolerance of a plant in need thereof, comprising introducing the polynucleotide of Claim 1 into said plant; and expressing said protein comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2.

35. (Currently Amended) A method of increasing the salt tolerance of a plant in need thereof, comprising introducing the polynucleotide of Claim 1 into said plant; and expressing the protein encoded by said polynucleotide.

36. (Withdrawn) A method of increasing the salt tolerance of a plant in need thereof, comprising enhancing the expression of the SOS 2 gene into said plant.

37. (Withdrawn) An isolated polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence in SEQ ID NO:2.

38. (Withdrawn) The isolated polypeptide of Claim 37 which has serine/threonine kinase activity.

39. (Withdrawn) An isolated polypeptide which is at least 70% identical to the isolated polypeptide of Claim 37 and which has serine/threonine kinase activity.

40. (Withdrawn) An isolated polypeptide which is at least 80% identical to the

isolated polypeptide of Claim 37 and which has serine/threonine kinase activity.

41. (Withdrawn) An isolated polypeptide which is at least 90% identical to the isolated polypeptide of Claim 37 and which has serine/threonine kinase activity.

42. (Withdrawn) An isolated polypeptide which is at least 95% identical to the isolated polypeptide of Claim 37 and which has serine/threonine kinase activity.

BASIS FOR THE AMENDMENT

Claims 4-8 and 33-35 have been amended.

The amendment of Claim 4 is supported by page 10, lines 21-23 and Claim 4 as originally filed. The amendment of Claims 5-8 is supported by the corresponding claims as originally filed, and page 8, line 10 to page 12, line 6. The amendment of Claims 33-35 is supported by the corresponding claims as originally filed and the specification at pages 4-18.

No new matter is believed to have been introduced by the present amendment.